

Discharge Instructions: Wound Care

These instructions explain what you or your care partner needs to do to continue your care at home. Please read and follow these instructions carefully.

Wound Care

Your doctor has placed sutures (stitches) to keep the incision closed for proper healing. You may have sutures that need to be removed in 1-3 weeks, or your sutures may all be under your skin with steri-strips (little white paper tapes) over the incision. Sutures under the skin will dissolve on their own.

Care of your incision is the same, regardless of the type of sutures used. Leave the original surgical gauze in place for 48 hours, and then gently remove it. If the bandage becomes loose before 48 hours, reinforce it with surgical tape.

After 48 hours (when the gauze is off)

- If you have steri-strips, leave them in place until they begin to fall off on their own; then you can gently wash them off. Do NOT pull on them before then because you could put stress on your incision.
- You may shower. Gently wash the incision with soap and water, pat the area dry, and leave it open to the air. Keep it clean and dry between washings.
- You do not need a new bandage or to use antibiotic ointment, alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide. If your sutures get caught on your clothes, or if you have slight drainage, cover the incision with a small piece of gauze and tape it in place. Use the least amount of tape possible, as it may irritate your skin.
- For the first few days after surgery, a small amount of drainage from the incision is not unusual. It usually goes away on its own. If you notice bleeding from the incision, apply firm, direct pressure for 10 minutes. If the bleeding continues, reapply firm, direct pressure for another 10 minutes. If you are still bleeding, call us or go to the nearest Emergency Room.

Restrictions

- Do not put the incision underwater for a long time. (Do not swim, take a bath, or sit in a hot tub.)
- Do not do any vigorous activities/exercise that may put stress on the incision.
- Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen, or any other medication that may cause problems with bleeding, unless your doctor gives you permission to do so.
- Avoid perfume or scented lotion near the incision, as it may cause irritation.
- Do not lift anything that weighs more than 10 pounds.
- If you take blood thinners such as Plavix® or Coumadin® (warfarin), your doctor will tell you when to restart your medication.

Pain Control

For pain after your procedure, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®), if needed. If you require a prescription for pain medication, your doctor will prescribe it for you.

Follow Up Care

If your sutures need to be removed, this is usually done 1-3 weeks after surgery. Even if your sutures will dissolve, the doctor usually likes to examine the incision while it is healing.

You should have been scheduled for a follow-up appointment in the clinic when you were discharged after surgery. Since this appointment is very important, please contact the clinic if you do not have one scheduled or if you need to change the date and/or time.

Call Us Immediately If...

- you have a **fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher**, chills, or night sweats
- you have increasing redness, pain, swelling, or pus at the surgical site
- you have bleeding that does not stop with firm pressure
- your incision opens up

If you have any questions or concerns please call **716-845-3180**. The STM Center is open Mon – Fri: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. After hours, call Roswell at 716-845-2300 and our Central Call Center staff will assist you. If it is determined you need to be seen, you may be asked to come to the Assessment and Treatment Center (ATC). The ATC is open 24/7 but you need a referral from your doctor (or the doctor on call). It is not a walk in clinic.

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